

My Sibling Has a
**Fetal Alcohol
Spectrum Disorder**

Can I catch it?



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
www.samhsa.gov

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What's This Booklet About?



Having a brother or sister can be fun. It can also be tough. They don't always do what you'd like. Or say what you'd like. Sometimes they embarrass you. If your sibling is different from everyone else, it's even harder.

Your sibling has a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or an FASD. It can be hard to understand and scary to think about.

This booklet can help answer some questions you may have. It tells you about FASD and helps you explore your feelings. It also shares ways to get help. And it has some fun games at the end.

Want to know more about FASD? Visit the Web site of the SAMHSA Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Center for Excellence at fasdcenter.samhsa.gov. You can also call 866-STOPFAS (866-786-7327). Or you can e-mail the Center at fasdcenter@samhsa.gov. Remember, you are not alone.



What Are Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders?

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, or FASD, can happen to kids whose moms drink alcohol when they're pregnant. The alcohol gets into the baby's body and hurts the brain. It can also hurt the bones and other organs.

There are different types of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, like fetal alcohol syndrome, or FAS. Kids with FAS look different. They are small for their age. They have small eyes and thin upper lips. The area between their nose and upper lip is smooth. Most people have a ridge there called a philtrum.



Other kids with an FASD look like you and me. But they have trouble learning and getting along. They also might have problems seeing, hearing, talking, or paying attention.

Some kids with an FASD have problems with math. Many kids can't tell time or count money. They may not understand what you're saying and may not laugh at your jokes. Some have trouble sitting still or waiting in line. Having an FASD makes life very hard.

Is There Anything Good About FASD?

All kids are special. Kids with an FASD have good things about them,

just like other kids. They can be very friendly and cheerful. They can have lots of energy and work hard. They're often kind to younger kids and animals.

Kids with an FASD like to help out and want to be liked. And they tend to play fair. You and your siblings with an FASD can teach each other and learn from each other.

Sometimes My Sibling Is a Pain.

Is It O.K. To Be Mad or Do I Have To Be Extra Nice Because My Sibling Has an FASD?

It's o.k. to have all kinds of feelings. Just remember that your brother or sister can't help it. Kids with an FASD can't always control how they act or what they say. They might walk up to strangers and say hi. You might get mad at them or be embarrassed. Talking to an adult or friend can help.

Some kids feel guilty that they are o.k. while their sibling has an FASD. Remember, you didn't cause your sibling's disability and you can't make it go away. If



your brother or sister does something wrong, it's o.k. to say so. You might have to say it over and over. Kids with an FASD don't always remember the rules. And if your sibling never gets it, just walk away. Fighting won't help.

Can I Catch an FASD?

No. Kids are born with an FASD. FASD is only caused when a mom drinks alcohol while she is pregnant. You can't catch it. Accepting kids with an FASD can help them a lot. They often feel left out and get ignored because other kids are afraid or think they're weird. You can help your sibling by letting your friends know about FASD.



Mom and Dad Are So Busy Taking Care of My Sibling I Feel Like I Don't Exist.

How Can I Get Their Attention?

Many kids whose siblings have an FASD feel jealous of all the attention their siblings get. It doesn't seem fair. You still need and deserve attention.

Tell your parents how you feel. Set aside time alone with one or both of them. Making your time with Mom or Dad part of the schedule might help.

I Feel Like the Only Kid Whose Sibling Has an FASD.

Where Can I Find Others?

You might feel all alone and think no one else has the same feelings or experiences. But you're not alone. Sadly, many women drink

alcohol when they're pregnant, so a lot of kids have an FASD. Some places have groups for siblings to share their feelings and help each other. One place that you or your parents can call is The Arc at 206-297-6368. Or visit their Web site at www.thearc.org.



Why Do We Have To Go to All These Therapy Sessions? It's Boring.

Some kids with an FASD need help learning how to do things. This is called therapy. There are many kinds of therapy. Physical therapy helps kids move around. Occupational therapy can help with everyday tasks, like brushing your teeth. Some kids need speech therapy to help them talk. And some need counseling to help them deal with their feelings about FASD and other problems.

You might need to go to your sibling's therapy sessions. Being stuck in a waiting room can be boring, so bring a book or some games to keep you busy. It might be important to participate in therapy like counseling to share your thoughts and

feelings. If not, ask about what your sibling does in therapy. You can learn ways to help and you might find it interesting.

My Parents Ask Me To Help Take Care of My Sibling.

Am I Stuck Doing That Because of His or Her FASD?

Taking care of your sibling is nice, but it's not your job. Talk to your parents if you feel like they're asking you to do too much. And if your sibling has a tantrum or might get hurt, get your parents right away. Don't try to handle it yourself.

Do help when you can. Your sibling may watch to see how you do

things. Teaching him or her can make you feel better about yourself. It can also help you understand what your sibling is going through.

I Want To Help My Sibling But I Don't Know What To Do. How Can I Help?

You have a special role in teaching your sibling. You can help by nicely reminding him or her to do things. You can repeat things if he or she doesn't understand or forgets. You can help your sibling with homework or chores. You can play games or sing or listen to music. Look for things your sibling likes that you can do together.

Also be careful about what you say. Slang is fun with your



friends, but kids with an FASD don't always understand it. If you ask, "What's up?" your sibling might look up to see what's there. So try to say exactly what you mean, like, "What are you doing?" or "How are you feeling?"

Do I Have To Be "Super Kid" To Make Up for My Sibling's FASD?

Some siblings feel like they have to do extra well to make up for their brother or sister's FASD. You might think getting straight A's or winning at sports will make your parents feel better. You don't have to do that. Just be yourself. Do your best because it makes *you* happy.

Your sibling may not be able to do all the things you can, but he or she can do other things. Remember, your parents can be proud of you and your sibling for whatever you each can do.

The Seven Cs

I didn't **Cause** it.

I can't **Cure** it.

I can't **Control** it.

I can take better **Care** of myself by **Communicating** my feelings and making healthy **Choices**, and **Celebrating** myself.

*National Association for
Children of Alcoholics*

Why Do Mothers Drink Alcohol When They Are Pregnant?

Don't They Know It Can Hurt Their Baby?

Moms don't hurt their babies on purpose. Some moms drink alcohol before they know they are pregnant. Others need help to stop drinking alcohol. So don't blame your mom or your sibling's mom, because she didn't hurt your siblings on purpose. Blaming her won't help your sibling.

If you think your mom is drinking too much, you might want to call Al-Anon/Alateen at 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) or the National Association for Children of



Alcoholics (301-468-0985). Talking to a teacher, counselor, or adult friend or relative may also help.

I Don't Know Much About FASD.

Where Can I Learn More?

You can check your local library or your school library. There's also a lot of information on the Web. You can try the FASD Center for Excellence (fasdcenter.samhsa.gov), The Arc (www.thearc.org), and the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (www.nofas.org).

Congratulations!

Now that you know about FASD, you can help your sibling. O.k., it's time for some games. Have fun!

Games

Word Search

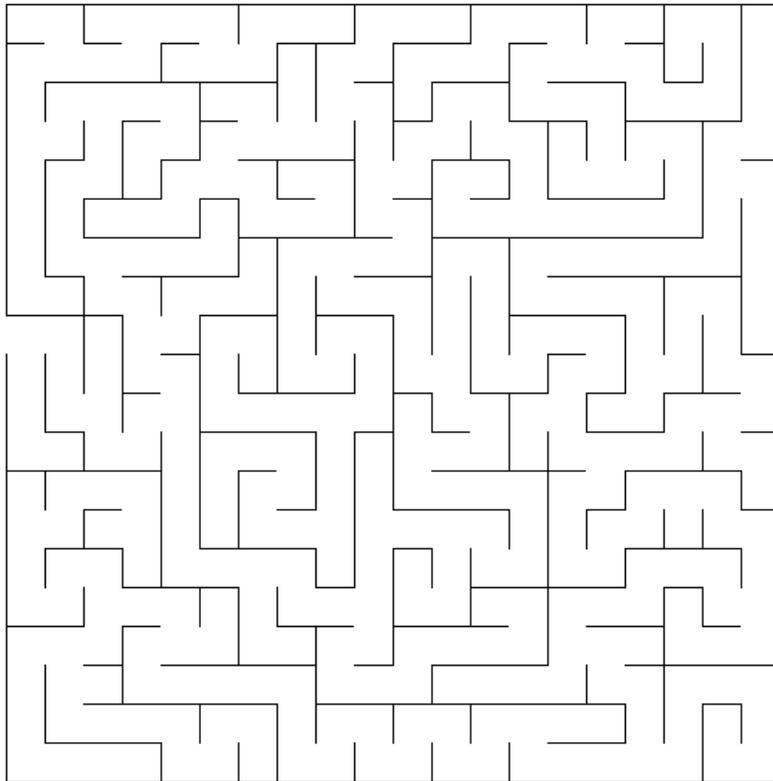
Find the words in the list below and circle them.

ALATEEN
ALCOHOL
ATTENTION
CELEBRATING
CHEERFUL
COMMUNICATING
COUNSELING
DISABILITY
DISORDERS
EMBARRASSED
FETAL
FRIENDLY
GUILTY
JEALOUS
PREGNANT
SIBLING
SPECIAL
SPECTRUM
TANTRUM
THERAPY

G	U	I	L	T	Y	U	N	D	H	L	S	T	E	G
L	C	X	N	I	Y	C	X	G	X	A	U	A	M	N
L	U	F	R	E	E	H	C	F	Y	T	O	N	B	I
M	O	N	K	D	V	J	G	X	W	E	L	T	A	L
Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	S	I	D	F	A	R	R	E
Y	P	A	R	E	H	T	G	O	B	G	E	U	R	S
G	N	I	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C	J	M	A	N
C	O	M	M	U	N	I	C	A	T	I	N	G	S	U
S	R	E	D	R	O	S	I	D	A	A	L	S	S	O
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A	T	T	E	N	T	I	O	N	T	O	C	L	L	J
X	S	P	E	C	T	R	U	M	E	H	E	I	C	C
T	N	A	N	G	E	R	P	P	E	O	P	N	C	E
X	C	Z	L	Q	Q	E	O	M	N	L	S	G	W	O

Maze

Jimmy has an FASD. Follow the maze to help him get to the school bus.



Answer Key

Word Search

G	U	I	L	T	Y	U	N	D	H	L	S	T	E	G
L	C	X	N	I	Y	C	X	G	X	A	U	A	M	N
L	U	F	R	E	E	H	C	F	Y	T	O	N	B	I
M	O	N	K	D	V	J	G	X	W	E	L	T	A	L
Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	S	I	D	F	A	R	R	E
Y	P	A	R	E	H	T	G	O	B	G	E	U	R	S
G	N	I	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C	J	M	A	N
C	O	M	M	U	N	I	C	A	T	I	N	G	S	U
S	R	E	D	R	O	S	I	D	A	A	L	S	S	O
R	W	Q	H	T	Q	U	R	H	L	L	A	I	E	C
Y	L	D	N	E	I	R	F	A	A	C	I	B	D	Q
A	T	T	E	N	T	I	O	N	T	O	C	L	L	J
X	S	P	E	C	T	R	U	M	E	H	E	I	C	C
T	N	A	N	G	E	R	P	P	E	O	P	N	C	E
X	C	Z	L	Q	Q	E	O	M	N	L	S	G	W	O

Things to Talk About

Here are some things you can talk about with your parents.

1) What did you learn?

2) How can you help your sibling?

3) Where can you go to find more information on FASD?

Stop and think. If you're pregnant, don't drink.
For more information, visit fasdcenter.samhsa.gov or call 866-STOPFAS.
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov



SAMHSA
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